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OUTGOING TELEGRAM

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TAGS: MILI, SA

SUBJECT: F-15 ACCESSORY EQUIPMENT

1. FOR YOUR BACKGROUND INFORMATION, FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF JULY 22 RESPONSE FROM SECRETARY MUSKIE TO SENATOR BYRD.

BEGIN TEXT:

DEAR MR. MAJORITY LEADER:

I AM REPLYING TO YOUR LETTER OF JUNE 23 TO PRESIDENT CARTER CONCERNING SUPPLEMENTAL EQUIPMENT FOR SAUDI ARABIAN F-15 AIRCRAFT.

I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAS NOT DEPARTED FROM THE ASSURANCES GIVEN TO THE CONGRESS BY SECRETARY BROWN IN 1978 AND THAT YOUR VIEWS AND THOSE OF THE CONGRESS WOULD BE TAKEN FULLY INTO ACCOUNT IN REVIEWING SAUDI ARABIAN REQUESTS FOR SUCH EQUIPMENT.

THIS IS NOT A MATTER PENDING DECISION WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT AND NO DECISION ON THIS ISSUE WOULD BE MADE WITHOUT FULL PRIOR CONSULTATIONSWITHTHECONGRESS.

I HOPE THIS CLARIFIES THE SITUATION SO THAT THERE WILL BE NO MISAPPREHENSIONS AS TO THE POSITION OF THIS ADMINISTRATION. SINCERELY, EDMUND S. MUSKIE. END TEXT. ENCLOSED WAS SECDEF BROWN'S 1978 LETTER TO CONGRESS.

2. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF SENATOR BYRD'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT CARTER, DATED JUNE 23:

BEGIN TEXT:

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT:

I URGE YOU NOT TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL FOR SUPPLEMENTAL EQUIPMENT FOR THE SAUDI ARABIAN F-15 AIRCRAFT TO CONGRESS AT THIS TIME. I WOULD PERSONALLY OPPOSE SUCH A SALE, AND I BELIEVE THAT THE PROPOSAL WOULD MEET STRONG OPPOSITION IN THE SENATE.

AS YOU WILL RECALL, IN 1978, I STRONGLY SUPPORTED YOUR DECISION TO SELL THE F-15 AIRCRAFT TO SAUDI ARABIA. I MADE A CONSIDERABLE EFFORT TO HELP DEFEAT A RESOLUTION OF DISAPPROVAL OF THAT SALE. I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD ASSIST AND COOPERATE WITH SAUDI ARABIA TO ASSURE ITS SECURITY IN A VITAL AND UNSTABLE REGION. SUCH A RELATIONSHIP IS CLEARLY IN THE INTEREST OF BOTH NATIONS.

HOWEVER, I SERIOUSLY QUESTION THE ADVISABILITY OR NECESSITY OF THE SALE OF SUPPLEMENTAL EQUIPMENT FOR THE F-15. SUCH A SALE WOULD CONTRAVENE THE ASSURANCES GIVEN TO ME AND OTHERS IN CONGRESS ONLY TWO YEARS AGO THAT THE PLANES WOULD NOT BE EQUIPPED WITH SUPPLEMENTAL "OFFENSIVE" FEATURES. I CITED THESE ASSURANCES IN URGING SENATE SUPPORT FOR THE SALE OF THE F-15. THESE UNDERSTANDINGS WERE EXPLICIT AND WERE CRUCIAL TO THE SENATE'S DECISION TO APPROVE THE SALE.

I CAN SEE NO RATIONALE THAT WOULD NOW JUSTIFY PROVIDING THIS KIND OF OFFENSIVE CAPABILITY FOR THE F-15'S AND THEREFORE HOPE YOU WILL NOT PURSUE THE MATTER. SINCERELY, ROBERT C. BYRD. END TEXT. MUSKIE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY F Schmeltzer DATE 7/2/85
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RELEASABLE [✓]
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